

The invention claimed is:

1. A mobile phone having means for displaying text/graphics, means for inputting alphanumeric characters to the phone, means for selecting desired operational functionalities of the phone and means for navigating sub-operational functionalities within a selected operational functionality wherein the improvement is characterized by means for making a user aware of one or more next possible sub-operational functionalities available for user selection in said selected operational functionality.
2. The mobile phone as defined in claim 1 wherein said means for making a user aware is further characterized by a first text menu list of suggested next possible sub-functionalities available for selection, said first text menu list being shown on said display means in response to a desired operational functionality being chosen by said functionality selecting means.
3. The mobile phone as defined in claim 1 wherein said means for making a user aware is further characterized by illuminating one or more selection keys associated with next possible sub-operational functionalities available for user selection.
4. The mobile phone as defined in claim 2 wherein a text menu list containing at least one next possible sub-operational functionality is displayed in response to the operation of a corresponding one of said one or more selection keys.

5. The mobile phone as defined in claim 1 further including means for deactivating said means for making a user aware of next possible sub-operational functionalities.
6. The mobile phone as defined in claim 1 wherein said means for making a user aware is further characterized by one or more user action prompting instructions.
7. The mobile phone as defined in claim 6 wherein said user action prompting instruction is a text message representation.
8. The mobile phone as defined in claim 6 wherein said user action prompting instruction is a graphic message representation.
9. The mobile phone as defined in claim 3 wherein said illuminated selection key is color illuminated.
10. The mobile phone as defined in claim 3 wherein said illuminated selection key flashes on and off.
11. The mobile phone as defined in claim 8 wherein said graphic representation is further characterized by showing on the mobile phone display means one or more selection keys for possible selection to activate a next possible sub-operational functionality corresponding to the given operational context and sequence progression step in the selected desired operational functionality.

12. The mobile phone as defined in claim 1 wherein said means for making a user aware is further characterized by providing one or more distinctive tones each of which tones corresponds to a given selection key associated with next possible sub-operational functionalities available for user selection.

13. The mobile phone as defined in claim 1, wherein said means for making a user aware is further characterized by an icon of a key corresponding to a short-cut key for carrying out the operational sequence progression steps corresponding to the selected desired operational functionality.

14. A mobile phone having a display for showing text/graphics, keypad means for inputting alphanumeric characters to the phone and for selecting and accessing desired operational functionalities and features of the phone wherein the phone has at least one menu driven operational function, the improvement comprising means for making a user aware of one or more possible next feature selections available in the menu driven operational function.

15. The mobile phone as defined in claim 14 wherein said means for making a user aware is further characterized by highlighting one or more next feature selections shown in a menu list of features in the menu driven operational function.

16. The mobile phone as defined in claim 14 wherein said means for making a user aware is further characterized by voice announcement of one or more next feature selections available from a list of features in the menu driven operational function.

17. The mobile phone as define in claim 16 further characterized by voice recognition means for responding to a feature selection spoken by the user.

18. A mobile phone having a display screen, a memory for storing at least one instruction set for carrying out the functions of the mobile phone, keypad means for selecting a desired function and for operating the mobile phone, the improvement characterized by means for providing an indication of next possible functionalities available for selection corresponding to the operational context and sequence progression steps of the given selected desired function.

19. The mobile phone as defined in claim 18 wherein said means for providing an indication is further characterized by a visual indication of one or more keys each of which keys is associated with a next possible functionality available for selection.

20. The mobile phone as defined in claim 19 further characterized in that the keypad means is a physical keypad.

21. The mobile phone as defined in claim 18 further characterized in that the keypad is a virtual keypad.

22. The mobile phone as defined in claim 19 further characterized in that a text message associated with each of said one or more keys is shown on the display screen to explain the functionality of the key.

23. The mobile phone as defined in claim 19 further characterized in that said visual indication is an illuminated key.

24. The mobile phone as defined in claim 23 further characterized in that said illuminated key is a colored key.

25. The mobile phone as defined in claim 24 further characterized in that said colored key changes color to provide said visual indication.

26. The mobile phone as defined in claim 18 wherein said means for providing an indication is further characterized by audio tones corresponding to one or more keys each of which keys is associated with a next possible functionality available for selection.

27. A mobile phone having a display screen, electronic circuit means for carrying out the operational functions of the phone, memory means coupled to the electronic circuitry means for storing at least one instruction set for controlling the operation of the phone, and means for selecting a desired operational function, the improvement characterized by means for hinting at next possible operational functionalities available for selection corresponding to the operational context and progression stage in the given selected desired function.

28. A method for providing hinting capabilities in a mobile telephone characterized by the steps of:

identifying a desired operational function;

selecting the identified desired operational function;
determining additional sub-functionalities available for the selected operational function;
associating a key of the mobile phone with each of the available sub-functionalities; and
identifying one or more of the associated keys to hint at the next possible sub-functionalities available for selection corresponding to the given operational context and sequence progression step in the selected operational function.

29. The method as defined in claim 28 wherein the step of determining additional sub-functionalities is further characterized by identifying all additional functionalities available for selection.

30. The method as defined in claim 28 wherein the step of identifying one or more associated keys is characterized by illuminating the key to make a user aware of its availability for selection as a next possible operational functionality.

31. The method as defined in claim 30 wherein the steps of illuminating the key is further characterized by illuminating the key in color.

32. The method as defined in claim 31 wherein the step of illuminating the key is further characterized by flashing the key on and off.

33. The method as defined in claim 28 wherein the step of identifying one or more associated keys is characterized by showing an icon representing the associated key

on the display of the mobile phone to make a user aware of its availability for selection as a next possible operational functionality.

34. The method as defined in claim 33 further characterized in that the associated key is a short-cut key.

35. The method as defined in claim 28 wherein the step of identifying one or more of the associated keys includes the step of providing one or more distinctive audio tones each of which tones corresponds to an identified associated key.

36. The method as defined in claim 28 further characterized by operating one or more of the associated keys to select the sub-functionality corresponding to the operated associated key.

37. The method as defined in claim 36 wherein the step of operating one or more of the associated keys is further characterized by voice recognition operation by speaking the name of the key.

38. A computer program stored in a computer readable medium for carrying out the steps of claim 28.